



(19)

Europäisches Patentamt
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets



(11)

EP 1 184 017 A1

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(43) Date of publication:
06.03.2002 Bulletin 2002/10

(51) Int Cl.7: **A61F 13/15**

(21) Application number: 01307478.0

(22) Date of filing: 03.09.2001

(84) Designated Contracting States:
AT BE CH CY DE DK ES FI FR GB GR IE IT LI LU
MC NL PT SE TR
Designated Extension States:
AL LT LV MK RO SI

(72) Inventors:
• Shimada, Takaaki, Uni-Charm Corporation
Mito-ye-gun, Kagawa-ken 769-1602 (JP)
• Nakamura, Kenji, Uni-Charm Corporation
Mito-ye-gun, Kagawa-ken 769-1602 (JP)

(30) Priority: 01.09.2000 JP 2000268104

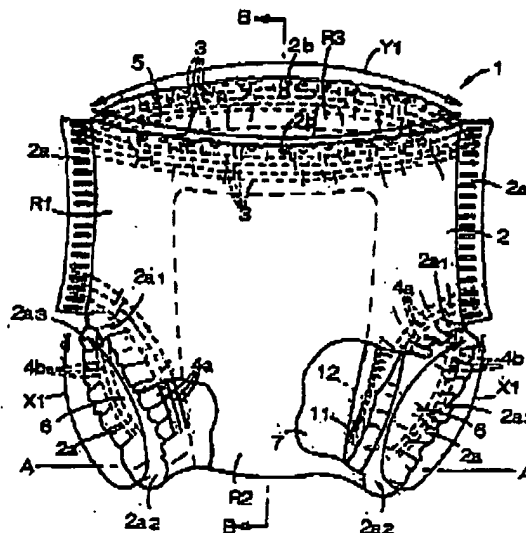
(74) Representative: Parry, Christopher Stephen
Saunders & Dolleymore, 9 Rickmansworth Road
Watford, Herts. WD18 0JU (GB)

(71) Applicant: Uni-Charm Corporation
Kawanoe-shi, Ehime-ku (JP)

(54) Disposable pull-on diaper

(57) A disposable pull-on diaper 1 includes elastic members attached under tension to peripheral edge portions 2a of leg-openings 6 and a pair of leak-barrier cuffs 11 provided in the vicinity of transversely opposite side edges of a core. The elastic members associated with the leg-openings include first elastic members 4a extending along front peripheral edge portions 2a₁ of the leg-openings 6 and second elastic members extending

along rear peripheral edge portions 2a₂ of the leg-openings 6 and, in a crotch region R2, the free side edge portions of the leak-barrier cuffs 11 extend inward beyond the side edges of said core and are folded back along substantially middle folding zones thereof outward beyond the side edges of the core and wherein the free side edge portions are bonded, in the vicinity of the folding zones, to the outer surface of the topsheet in the upper zone of the core.

FIG.1**EP 1 184 017 A1**

1

EP 1 184 017 A1

2

Description

[0001] This invention relates to a disposable pull-on diaper adapted to absorb and hold excretion discharged thereon.

[0002] Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 1997-24063A describes a pants-type disposable diaper basically comprising a liquid-pervious topsheet, a liquid-impervious backsheet and a liquid-absorbent core disposed between the top- and backsheets, configuring front and rear waist regions opposed to each other and a crotch region extending between these two waist regions so that the front and rear waist regions may be connected to each other to a waist-opening and a pair of leg-openings, wherein elastic members being stretchable in a leg-surrounding direction are attached under tension to peripheral edge portions of the leg-openings, the diaper further comprising a pair of substantially liquid-impervious leak-barrier cuffs (flaps) extending in the leg-surrounding direction in the vicinity of transversely opposite side edges of the core.

[0003] In the case of this diaper of prior art, each of the leak-barrier cuffs (flaps) comprising inner and outer sections has a fixed side edge portion, a free side edge portion normally biased to rise on the topsheet and fixed longitudinally opposite end portions collapsed inwardly of the diaper. The respective fixed side edge portions are bonded to the topsheet in the vicinity of transversely opposite side edges of the core and the respective fixed end portions are bonded to the topsheet in the front and rear waist regions. The elastic members being stretchable in the leg-surrounding direction are attached under tension to the respective free side edge portions. In the crotch region, the free side edge portions defining the outer cuffs (flaps) extend inwardly of the core and these free side edge portions are folded back along substantially middle zones thereof outwardly of the core.

[0004] The diaper disclosed in the Publication is adapted to be worn in the manner that a wearer inserts his or her legs into the respective leg-openings and then the diaper is pulled up to the wearer's waist. In the case of this diaper, the elastic members associated with the leg-openings extend along the entire peripheral edge portions of the respective leg-openings and the middle zones of the respective outer cuff (flap) sections along which the free side edge portions are folded back outwardly of the core are not bonded to the diaper and the free side edge portions of the respective outer cuff (flap) sections rising in the crotch region define relatively high barriers. With a disadvantageous consequence, contraction of the elastic members associated with the leg-openings as well as rising of the free side edge portions of the outer cuff (flap) sections reduce the respective leg-openings. As a result, the free side edge portions of the respective outer cuff (flap) sections extending in the crotch region may obstruct the wearer's legs against being smoothly inserted into the respective leg-openings and make wearing time-consuming operation.

[0005] It is an object of this invention to provide a disposable pull-on diaper adapted to be smoothly worn without an anxiety that the free side edge portions of the leak-barrier cuffs might obstruct the wearer's legs against easily being inserted into the leg-openings.

[0006] According to this invention, there is provided a disposable pull-on diaper basically comprising a liquid-pervious topsheet, a liquid-impervious backsheet and a liquid-absorbent core disposed between the top- and backsheets, configuring front and rear waist regions opposed to each other and a crotch region extending between these two waist regions so that the front and rear waist regions may be connected to each other to a waist-opening and a pair of leg-openings, wherein elastic members being stretchable in a leg-surrounding direction are attached under tension to peripheral edge portions of the leg-openings, the diaper further comprising a pair of substantially liquid-impervious leak-barrier cuffs extending in the leg-surrounding direction in the vicinity of transversely opposite side edges of the core.

[0007] The improvement according to this invention is in that the elastic members associated with the leg-openings comprise first elastic members extending in the leg-surrounding direction along a front peripheral edge portion of the leg-opening on the side of the front waist region and second elastic members extending in the leg-surrounding direction along a rear peripheral edge portion of the leg-opening on the side of the rear waist region wherein none of the elastic members associated with the leg-openings are present along an intermediate peripheral edge portions extending between the front and rear peripheral edge portions of the leg-opening, the leak-barrier cuffs respectively have fixed side edge portions extending in the leg-surrounding direction in the vicinity of the respective side edge portions of the core, free side edge portions being contiguous to the fixed side edge portions and normally biased to rise on the topsheet and fixed longitudinally opposite end portions collapsed inwardly of the diaper and placed upon the topsheet in the front and rear waist region and, in the crotch region, the free side edge portions extend inward beyond the side edges of the core and are folded back along substantially middle folding lines thereof outward beyond the side edges of the core wherein the free side edge portions are bonded, in the vicinity of the middle folding lines, to the outer surface of the topsheet in the upper zone of the core.

[0008] According to one preferred embodiment of this invention, the first elastic members present a stretch stress higher than that of the second elastic members.

Fig. 1 is a perspective view showing an embodiment of a disposable pull-on diaper according to this invention as partially broken away;

Fig. 2 is a plan view separately showing the pants and the pad constituting the diaper;

Fig. 3 is a sectional view taken along a line A - A in Fig. 1; and

3

EP 1 184 017 A1

4

Fig. 4 is a sectional view taken along a line B - B in Fig. 1.

[0009] Details of the disposable pull-on wearing article according to this invention will be more fully understood from the description of a disposable pull-on diaper as a typical embodiment given hereunder with reference to the accompanying drawings.

[0010] Fig. 1 is a perspective view showing an embodiment of a disposable pull-on diaper 1 according to this invention as partially broken away and Fig. 2 is a plan view separately showing the pants 2 and the pad 7 constituting the diaper 1 as front and rear waist regions R1, R3 have been disconnected from each other and the diaper 1 has been developed in its longitudinal direction. Referring to Fig. 1, a leg-surrounding direction is indicated by an arrow X1 and a waist-surrounding direction is indicated by an arrow Y1. Referring to Fig. 2, a longitudinal direction is indicated by an arrow X2 and a transverse direction is indicated by an arrow Y2. The herein used expression "inner surfaces" of the pants 2 as well as the top- and backsheets should be understood to be the surfaces thereof facing a core and the expression "outer surfaces" thereof should be understood to be the surfaces thereof being remote from the core.

[0011] The diaper 1 comprises the pants 2 and a liquid-absorbent pad 7 attached to the inner surface of the pants 2. The pants 2 comprise two layers of a nonwoven fabric placed one upon another so that surfaces thereof opposed to each other are intermittently bonded together. The pad 7 comprises a liquid-pervious topsheet 8, a liquid-impervious backsheet 9, a liquid-absorbent core 10 and pair of substantially liquid-impervious leak-barrier cuffs 11.

[0012] The pants 2 are composed of front and rear waist regions R1, R3 opposed to each other and a crotch region R2 extending between these two waist regions R1, R3. As will be apparent from Fig. 2, the pants 2 are contoured by transversely opposite side edge portions 2a extending in parallel to each other in the longitudinal direction and curving inward in the transverse direction of the pants 2 in the crotch region R2 so as to describe circular arcs and longitudinally opposite end portions 2b extending in parallel to each other in the transverse direction. In the pants 2, the front and rear waist regions R1, R3 are bonded intermittently along the side edge portions 2a of the pants 2 so as to define a waist-opening 5 and a pair of leg-openings 6. The longitudinally opposite end portions 2b define a peripheral edge portion of the waist-opening 5 and the transversely opposite side edge portions 2a in the crotch region R2 define peripheral edge portions of the respective leg-openings 6.

[0013] The waist-opening 5 is provided along its peripheral edge portion 2b with a plurality of elastic members 3 being stretchable in the waist-surrounding direction and attached under tension thereto. These elastic members 3 associated with the waist-opening are cov-

ered with a part of the peripheral edge portion 2b of the waist-opening 5 which is folded back onto the inner surface of the pants 2.

[0014] Each of the leg-openings 6 is provided along its peripheral edge portion 2a with a plurality of elastic members being stretchable in the leg-surrounding direction and attached under tension thereto between two layers of the nonwoven fabric. These elastic members associated with each of the leg-openings comprise first elastic members 4a extending along a front peripheral edge portion 2a₁ of the leg-opening 6 on the side of the front waist region R1 and second elastic members 4b extending along a rear peripheral edge portion 2a₂ of the leg-opening 6 on the side of the rear waist region R3. None of the elastic members associated with each of the leg-openings are present along an intermediate peripheral edge portions 2a₃ extending between the front and rear peripheral edge portions 2a₁, 2a₂ of the leg-opening 6.

[0015] In the pants 2, a stretch stress of the first elastic member 4a is adjusted to be higher than that of the second elastic members 4b so that the front peripheral edge portions 2a₁ liable to be affected by movement of the wearer's legs can be tightly placed against the wearer's thighs and thereby excretion leak from the front peripheral edge portions 2a₁ can be reliably prevented.

[0016] The pad 7 is substantially rectangular and has a front zone r1, a rear zone r3 and an intermediate zone r2 extending between the front and rear zones r1, r3. As shown in Fig. 2, the pad 7 has transversely opposite side edge portions 7a extending in parallel in the longitudinal direction and longitudinally opposite end portions 7b extending in parallel in the transverse direction. As indicated by chain lines, the front zone r1 lies in the front waist region R1 of the pants 2, the intermediate zone r2 lies in the crotch region R2 of the pants 2 and the rear zone r3 lies in the rear waist region R3. In the pad 7, the outer surface of the backsheet 9 is bonded to the inner surface of the pants 2.

[0017] The core 10 is disposed between the top- and backsheets 8, 9 and entirely covered with bonded to tissue paper 13 (See Fig. 3) and bonded to the inner surface of at least one of the top- and backsheets 8, 9 with the tissue paper 13 therebetween.

[0018] The cuffs 11 respectively have fixed side edge portions 11a extending in the leg-surrounding direction in the vicinity of the respective side edge portions 10a of the core 10, free side edge portions 11b being contiguous to the fixed side edge portions 11a and normally biased to rise on the topsheet and fixed longitudinally opposite end portions 11c collapsed inward in the transverse direction of the pad 7. The free side edge portions 11b are provided with elastic members 12 being stretchable in the leg-surrounding direction and bonded under tension thereto. These elastic members 12 are covered with a part of the free side edge portions 11b. The fixed end portions 11c are bonded to the outer surface of the topsheet 8 in the front and rear zones r1, r3 of the pad 7.

5

EP 1 184 017 A1

6

[0019] In the diaper 1, the peripheral edge portion 2b of the waist-opening 6, the peripheral edge portions 2a of the leg-openings 8 and the free side edge portions 11b of the cuffs 11 are formed with a plurality of gathers as the elastic members 3, 4a, 4b, 12 contract. In the diaper 1, the pad 7 curves, in the longitudinal direction, with the topsheet 8 inside and the free side edge portions 11b of the respective cuffs 11 rise on the topsheet 8 as the elastic members 12 contract.

[0020] Fig. 3 is a sectional view taken along a line A - A in Fig. 1 and Fig. 4 is a sectional view taken along a line B - B in Fig. 1. The fixed side edge portions 11a of the respective cuffs 11 are disposed between the top- and backsheets 8, 9 and bonded to respective inner surfaces of these sheets 8, 9. In the intermediate zone r2 of the pad 7, the free side edge portions 11b extend inward in the transverse direction beyond the side edges 10a of the core 10 and the free side edge portions 11b are folded back along substantially middle folding lines thereof outward beyond the side edges 10a of the core 10. In the vicinity of the middle folding lines 11d, the free side edge portions 11b are bonded to the outer surface of the topsheet 8 in the upper zone of the core 10.

[0021] Of the respective free side edge portions 11b, a dimension L1 as measured from the folding lines 11d to the upper ends is preferably in a range of 10 - 50 mm. If the dimension L1 is less than 10 mm, the free side edge portions 11b could not rise to a height sufficient to fulfill their desired leak-barrier function and excretion leak would readily occur from the crotch region R2. If the dimension L1 exceeds 50 mm, on the contrary, the free side edge portions 11b of the cuffs would often obstruct the wearer's legs from being smoothly inserted into the respective leg-openings 6 when the diaper 1 is put on the wearer's body.

[0022] In the pad 7, the rising free side edge portions 11b of the respective cuffs 11 form barriers of an appropriate height to prevent excretion leak from the side edges 7a of the pad 7. In the pad 7, cavities 14 are defined between portions of respective cuffs 11 extending from the folds 11d to the fixed side edge portions 11a, on one hand, and the topsheet 8, on the other hand. Excretion can be absorbed within these cavities 14 also and, in this way, the entire upper surface of the pad 7 can be effectively utilized.

[0023] In the diaper 1 according to this embodiment, none of the elastic members associated with the leg-opening 6 are present along the intermediate peripheral edge portions 2a of the leg-opening 6, i.e., the peripheral edge portion 2a of the leg-opening 6 can only partially contract. In addition to this feature, the dimension L1 by which the free side edge portions 11b of the cuffs 11 rise is limited to the range, so it can be avoided that the free side edge portions 11b might form relatively high barriers in the crotch region R2. Before the diaper 1 is worn, therefore, it is not apprehended that the leg-openings 6 might be significantly reduced even when the first and second elastic members 4a, 4b contract and con-

sequently the free side edge portions 11b of the cuffs 11 rise. This means that the free side edge portions 11b of the cuffs 11 extending in the crotch region R2 do not obstruct the wearer's legs from being smoothly inserted into the respective leg-openings 8 when the diaper 1 is put on the wearer's body.

[0024] The pants 2 are preferably formed with a hydrophobic nonwoven fabric. The pants 2 may be also formed with a composite sheet consisting of a stretchable nonwoven fabric, a hydrophobic nonwoven fabric and a plastic film laminated one upon another.

[0025] The topsheet 8 may be formed with a liquid-pervious sheet such as a nonwoven fabric or a porous plastic film, more preferably with a liquid-pervious and a hydrophilic sheet. The backsheet 9 may be formed with a hydrophobic nonwoven fabric, a liquid-impervious plastic film or a laminated sheet consisting of a hydrophobic nonwoven fabric and a plastic film, more preferably with a breathable and a liquid-impervious sheet. The cuffs 11 may be formed with a hydrophobic nonwoven fabric. It is also possible to form the backsheet 9 and the cuffs 11 with a composite nonwoven fabric comprising highly water-resistant melt blown nonwoven fabric and two layers of spun bond nonwoven fabric having high strength and flexibility and sandwiching therebetween the melt blown nonwoven fabric.

[0026] The nonwoven fabric used for this invention may be of various types such as spun lace-, needle punch-, melt blown-, thermal bond-, spun bond-, chemical bond- and air through-types. The component fiber of the nonwoven fabric may be selected from a group including polyolefine-, polyester- and polyamide-based fibers and core-sheath- or side-by-side-type polyethylene/polypropylene or polyester conjugated fibers.

[0027] The core 10 comprises a mixture of fluff pulp, high absorption polymer grains and thermoplastic synthetic resin fiber compressed to a desired thickness. The polymer grains may be selected from a group including graft polymer of starch-based, cellulose-based and synthetic polymers.

[0028] Bonding the nonwoven fabric, bonding of the top- and backsheets 8, 9 to each other or bonding of the cuffs 11 and the core 10 to the top- and backsheets 8, 9, and attaching of the elastic members 12 to the cuffs 11 may be carried out using suitable adhesive such as hot melt adhesive or using suitable welding technique such as heat sealing or supersonic sealing technique.

[0029] The disposable diaper according to this invention has a unique arrangement such that the elastic members associated with the leg-openings comprise first elastic members extending along the front peripheral edge portions of the respective leg-openings and the second elastic members extending along the rear peripheral edge portions of the respective leg-openings and the elastic members is absent along the intermediate peripheral edge portions of the respective leg-openings. Such unique arrangement prevents the entire peripheral edge portions of the respective leg-openings

7

EP 1 184 017 A1

8

from contracting under the effect of the elastic members associated with the leg-openings. Another important feature of this diaper lies in that the free side edge portions of the respective cuffs are bonded in the vicinity of the folded zones to the topsheet in the upper part of the core so that the rising free side edge portions of the respective cuffs may not form undesirably high barriers in the crotch region. In this way, the diaper according to this invention avoids the inconvenience that the leg-openings might be made extremely narrow as the diaper of prior art has been the case. Thus, there is no anxiety that the free side edge portions of the cuffs extending in the crotch region might obstruct smooth insertion of the wearer's legs into the respective leg-openings to wear the diaper.

per and placed upon said topsheet in said front and rear waist region; and,

In said crotch region, said free side edge portions extend inward beyond the side edges of said core and are folded back along substantially middle folding lines thereof outward beyond the side edges of said core wherein said free side edge portions are bonded, in the vicinity of said middle folding lines, to the outer surface of said topsheet in the upper zone of the core.

2. The diaper according to Claim 1, wherein said first elastic members present a stretch stress higher than that of said second elastic members.

Claims

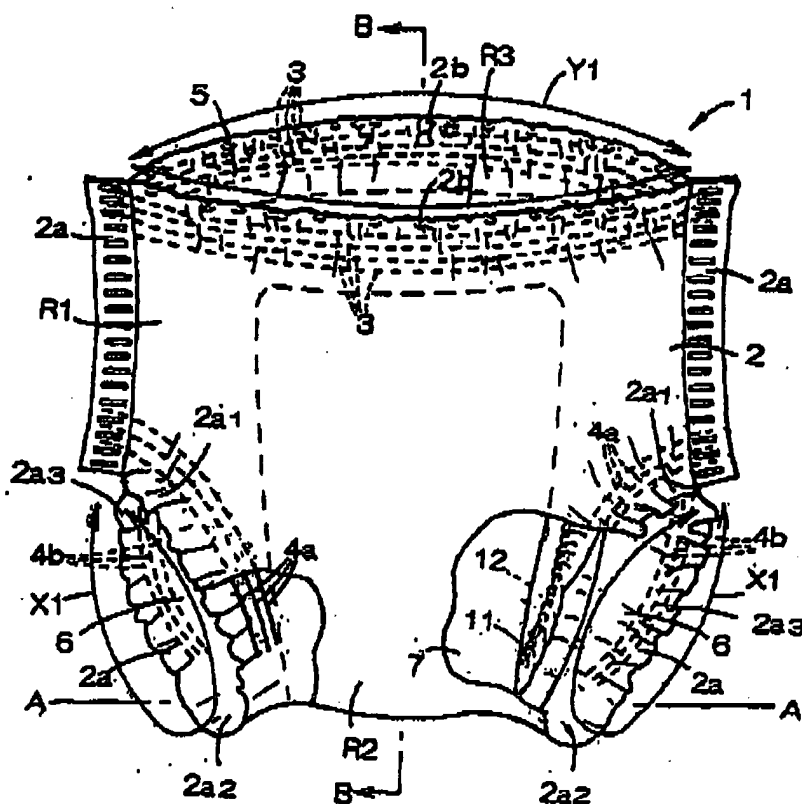
1. A disposable pull-on diaper basically comprising a liquid-pervious topsheet, a liquid-impervious backsheet and a liquid-absorbent core disposed between said top- and backsheets, configuring front and rear waist regions opposed to each other and a crotch region extending between these two waist regions so that said front and rear waist regions may be connected to each other to a waist-opening and a pair of leg-openings, wherein elastic members being stretchable in a leg-surrounding direction are attached under tension to peripheral edge portions of said leg-openings, said diaper further comprising a pair of substantially liquid-impervious leak-barrier cuffs extending in said leg-surrounding direction in the vicinity of transversely opposite side edges of said core, wherein:

said elastic members associated with the leg-openings comprise first elastic members extending in said leg-surrounding direction along a front peripheral edge portion of said leg-opening on the side of said front waist region and second elastic members extending in said leg-surrounding direction along a rear peripheral edge portion of the leg-opening on the side of the rear waist region wherein none of the elastic members associated with said leg-openings are present along an intermediate peripheral edge portions extending between said front and rear peripheral edge portions of said leg-opening;

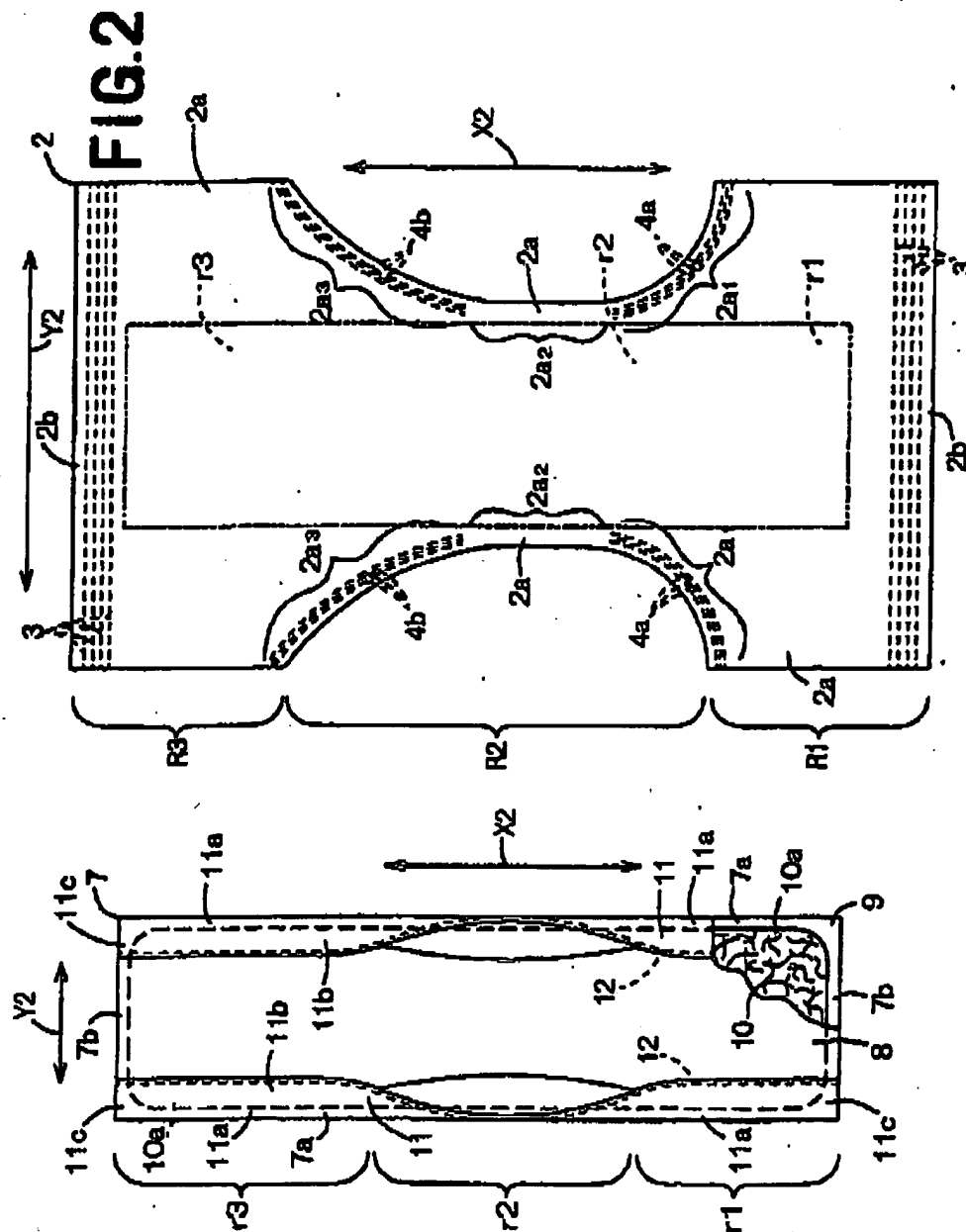
said leak-barrier cuffs respectively have fixed side edge portions extending in said leg-surrounding direction in the vicinity of the respective side edge portions of said core, free side edge portions being contiguous to said fixed side edge portions and normally biased to rise on said topsheet and fixed longitudinally opposite end portions collapsed inwardly of said dia-

EP 1 184 017 A1

FIG. 1

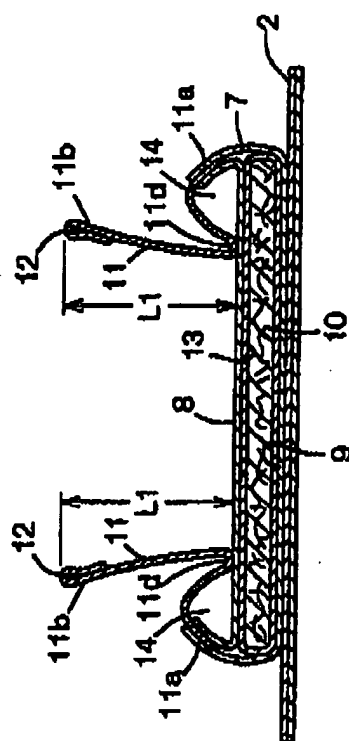


EP 1 184 017 A1



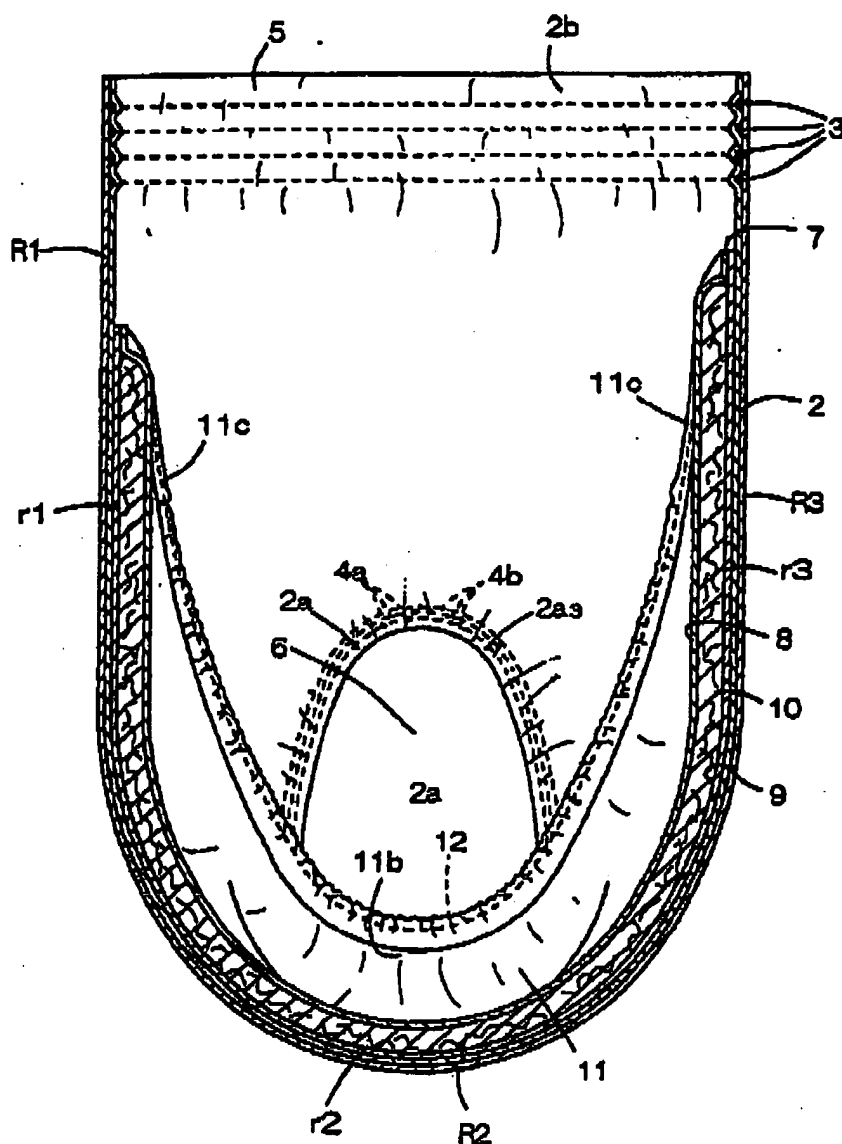
EP 1 184 017 A1

FIG. 3



EP 1 184 017 A1

FIG.4



EP 1 184 017 A1

European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 01 30 7476

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (INCL.7)
A	US 4 795 454 A (DRA600 JERRY L) 3 January 1989 (1989-01-03) * column 14, line 33 - line 61; figures 1,2 *	1,2	A61F13/15
D,A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 1997, no. 05, 30 May 1997 (1997-05-30) & JP 09 024063 A (UNI CHARM CORP), 28 January 1997 (1997-01-28) * abstract *	1,2	
A	EP 0 516 877 A (POPE & TALBOT CO) 9 December 1992 (1992-12-09) * abstract; figure 6 *	1,2	
			TECHNICAL FIELD SEARCHED (INCL.7)
			A61F
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search MUNICH		Date of completion of the search 11 December 2001	Examiner Westermayer, W
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS		Y : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document	
X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category		A : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	

EP 01 30 7476 (P.28/46)

EP 1 184 017 A1

ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.

EP 01 30 7476

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
The European Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

11-12-2001

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US 4795454 A	03-01-1989	AT 70170 T	15-12-1991
		AU 614065 B2	22-08-1991
		AU 7950287 A	14-04-1988
		BR 8705461 A	24-05-1988
		CA 1290501 A1	15-10-1991
		DE 3775161 D1	23-01-1992
		DK 530387 A	11-04-1988
		EG 18495 A	30-04-1993
		EP 0263720 A1	13-04-1988
		ES 2026916 T3	16-05-1992
		FI 874457 A , B	11-04-1988
		GR 3003326 T3	17-02-1993
		HK 47194 A	20-05-1994
		IE 60672 B	10-08-1994
		JP 2561675 B2	11-12-1996
		JP 63182401 A	27-07-1988
		KR 9509236 B1	16-07-1996
		MX 174128 B	22-04-1994
		NZ 222115 A	26-02-1991
		PH 24439 A	25-06-1990
		PT 85890 A , B	01-11-1987
		TR 23472 A	22-01-1990
JP 09024063 A	28-01-1997	NONE	
EP 0516877 A	09-12-1992	US 5246431 A	21-09-1993
		AT 142466 T	15-09-1996
		DE 69122089 D1	17-10-1996
		DE 69122089 T2	06-02-1997
		EP 0516877 A1	09-12-1992

EPO FORM P4009

For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82